

## List of Approved Texts for Catechetical Instruction for the Diocese of Austin (2016)

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### What does it mean that a text is on the Conformity List?

A text or series on the Conformity List has been reviewed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Subcommittee on the Catechism and has received a declaration of conformity. This declaration states that **the text or series conforms to the teaching of the Church as found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church**. The review process is primarily intended for a *complete series* of catechetical materials which encompass, for example, grades K-8, grades 9-12, or a Catechumenate program (RCIA adapted for Children). The review process, however, can be adapted for a *single work or portions* of a complete catechetical series.

#### What does it mean if a text is not on the Conformity List?

A text not on the Conformity List may not yet have been reviewed by the Subcommittee on the Catechism. It may also be that the publisher has not submitted the text for review. In addition, a text that is not listed on the Conformity List may be outside the purview and mandate of the Subcommittee on the Catechism.

#### Who makes the decision as to which texts may be used in the diocese?

The local Ordinary (the Bishop) in his role as chief catechist determines which texts may be used. The Bishop typically relies on the work of the catechetical office of the diocese to help him develop a list that should be considered for review. The listing may also be shared with other experienced catechetical leaders and educators for feedback and recommendations. These are given to Bishop to review for possible modification and final approval.

#### How are approved texts chosen for use in the Diocese of Austin?

The texts on our diocesan approved list come from **the [Conformity Review List](#) of United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)**, which is revised at least bi-annually. The texts chosen from the USCCB Conformity list are the ones that correlate with the **[Diocese of Austin Religious Education Curriculum](#)** (2013) which is approved by our Bishop and implemented in our parish programs and Catholic schools. An approved religion text or series should meet these criteria:

- The series should promote a **knowledge of God, a true conversion to Jesus Christ** and, help to develop an intimate relationship with Him, who calls us to discipleship and sacramental life.
- The series or textbooks should include the **best practices in psychological and pedagogical processes** which will facilitate the student's learning and growth in faith in a holistic manner (GCD 121). The selected texts should emphasize on the development of materials and resources to help meet the needs of children with disabilities, special needs and multiple intelligences.
- The series should be **relatable to the generation addressed** [e.g., age appropriate in content and visuals], showing close acquaintance with anxieties and questionings, struggles and hopes that students go undergo.
- Texts and series should have **practical resources** such as manuals, lesson plans, multimedia, on-line resources and tangible materials for the catechist to facilitate the instruction, and to provide ways for parents and family members to continue the instruction at home, the Domestic Church, where Catechesis and formation begin.

### **How is this approved list to be used?**

Very simply, this list should be used as a reliable guide to help pastors and catechetical leaders (i.e. DRE's, youth ministers, and Catholic school religion teachers) review acceptable options and discern the series or texts that would best meet the needs of the parish or school; the *final authorization should be made by the pastor or principal*. Texts not listed, can only be used as supplemental resources, not as the primary texts for instruction.

### **Are supplemental texts typically on a USCCB list of conformity? If not, how is the diocesan catechetical office able to determine if the text should be considered supplemental?**

All texts from the USCCB Conformity listing that were not included in the diocesan list are deemed “supplemental” by the catechetical office of the Diocese of Austin; thus they can be used only in combination with an approved text. In other words, supplemental material is permitted for use only to enhance the curriculum in the approved books. The criteria for our office not proposing these USCCB-approved texts (which are nevertheless in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church) for the Diocesan list include the following:

- The text has not recently been revised to include cultural and social trends that can help students connect what they learn with their real world experiences.
- The method of delivering the material is not set up in a systematic way that builds from one year to the other.
- The Publisher does not follow our diocesan curriculum based on scope and sequence.
- The language and vocabulary used might be too difficult for the intended grade level.
- The method of instruction does not follow a kerygma-centered approach that invites a student to develop a relationship with Jesus who is at the center of our faith.

### **What about texts or curricula which are not found on a current USCCB list of conformity?**

Sometimes there are texts that are not found on the USCCB conformity listing because the Subcommittee on the Catechism has either not completed their evaluation, or the curriculum might not include a sufficient amount of text to evaluate. In some circumstances these may be deemed suitable for use but *only with prior approval from the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis*, and only as a supplemental resource and not as the main text for instruction.

### **How are we assured that supplemental texts are not being used as the primary texts?**

Ultimately, we can only provide improved clarity through the publication of the List of Approved Texts for the Diocese of Austin, relying on ratification from the Office of the Bishop. The list is published and promulgated with a letter from the local ordinary authorizing its use in the diocese. The diocesan catechetical office also conducts a periodic census of the programs used in parishes and schools by collecting information from the DRE, parish catechetical leader/youth minister, Catholic school religion coordinator, or the Pastor. This will help the diocesan office identify those who are not using the correct texts and give appropriate counsel.

The goal of our office is to assist catechetical leaders and youth ministers in using a primary text that is approved by not only the USCCB but also by our Bishop—while employing supplemental material creatively but not exclusively.